US Army Corps
of Engineers
New England District

Project Information

Providence River and Harbor Dredging Project

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696 Virginia Road, Concord, Massachusetts 01742-2751

When is the Project going to start and who is doing the work?

The project is scheduled to start in mid-March 2003. Great Lakes Dredge and Dock, Inc. (Great Lakes) from Oak Brook, Illinois will be the contractor doing the work. Bids were opened in November 2002. Of the 4 companies that bid, Great Lakes submitted the lowest bid. Bids ranged from a high of $53 million to the low bid of just under $43 million.

Will marinas, oil or cargo facilities be dredged in conjunction with the project?

Private facilities that have the proper State and Federal permits in place can be dredged in conjunction with the Federal work. The private facilities can use the proposed Confined Aquatic Disposal (CAD) cell that will be used for the Federal work provided they pay the entire cost of creating that capacity up front. While the Corps of Engineers cannot collect funds for this type of work directly from private entities, we can collect the funds through the local sponsor, who in this case is the State of Rhode Island represented by the Coastal Resources Management Council. Negotiating the dredging of those private facilities is the responsibility of the facility owners. The cost of dredging and transportation of the dredged material are separate from the costs of creating capacity in the CAD cell and totally a non-Federal cost. Private entities may also use the offshore disposal site in Rhode Island Sound if their sediments meet the applicable regulatory requirements. Questions regarding a Corps permit can be directed to Mr. Steve DiLorenzo at 978-318-8376.

Is the State paying for a portion of the work?

The State is required to cost share a portion of the construction of the CAD cells. Governor Almond signed a Project Cooperation Agreement for the project in November 2002. The preliminary estimate for the State's share is $7.4 million.

How long will the work take to complete?

We estimate it will take 18 months to complete the entire project. Weather delays, equipment failure, or the addition of a substantial amount of additional work could extend that time period.

Where is the material going to be placed?

The total project involves the dredging and disposal of almost 5.5 million cubic yards (mcy) of material. We plan to dredge the suitable maintenance material (material that meets the ocean disposal testing requirements) from the channel, about 2.8 mcy, and place it at an open water site in Rhode Island Sound (site 69b identified in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS)). The 1.1 mcy of unsuitable material will be placed into Confined Aquatic Disposal (CAD) cells located in the upper river. Creating the CAD

cells will require the removal of about 1.6 mcy of material. The majority of this material will be placed at site 69b. However, providing the State is willing to share this cost, a small portion, 200,000 cy or so of primarily sand and gravel, will be placed at the Johnson and Wales University property at Fields Point. The material will be used as fill for the University's proposed sports facilities.

Why dredge the Providence River Channel and Harbor?

The Providence River is the principal commercial waterway in Rhode Island. The harbor is an important route of entry for the state's supply of gas, oil and other fuels. Other products are also brought into or out of the state by this route. Over the years the channel has reduced in depth, or shoaled, forcing the Coast Guard to restrict ship traffic. The present condition of the channel requires ships to off-load oil onto barges capable of safely navigating the shallower channel. This off-loading, known as lightering, increases the overall number of ships coming into the harbor. It also creates a situation where oil is transferred in the mid-bay. If the harbor and channel were to continue to shoal, more severe restrictions would be placed on shipping. Eventually it may no longer be economical to use the port. Increasing the cost of shipping affects the cost of gas, home heating oil, and manufacturing in Rhode Island.

What steps are being taken to monitor the work to insure compliance with State and Federal environmental requirements?

There are a number of efforts planned to insure compliance with applicable laws and regulations. The Corps will have staff on-site during the entire duration of the project and will closely monitor the contractor on a full time basis. Each disposal action of material at the open water disposal site will be witnessed by an on-board inspector. The equipment used to transport and haul the material will have on-board sensors that will monitor the status of the equipment (scow draft) and its location. We will be able to tell where each load of material was placed. A specified number of disposal actions of material into the CAD cells will be monitored to insure the water quality standards are not exceeded. The offshore site will also be monitored to insure even loading of the sediment at the site and to insure disposal plumes do not exceed Federal standards.

How would open water disposal affect surrounding shorelines?

Suspended sediment would not accumulate on surrounding shorelines. The vast majority of sediment released during disposal operations falls quickly to the bottom. A small portion remains suspended in the water and is transported from the disposal point with currents. As the plume moves with the tides, sediment continues to fall to the bottom and is diluted by surrounding water until suspended solids concentrations (turbidity) return to normal. Any material released during disposal or eroded from a disposal mound is not likely to result in large deposits of sediments outside the disposal site, particularly along shallow areas and shorelines exposed to strong waves and currents.

What if I have a question about some aspect of the work as it's ongoing?

You can contact Ed O'Donnell, the project manager at 978-318-8375, or Maurice Beaudoin, the on-site Resident Engineer at 978-318-8223.

How can I get more information or learn more about the project?

Copies of the FEIS are available at various libraries throughout Rhode Island and on the New England District internet homepage: www.nae.usace.army.mil/projects/ri/prp/prvdrv.htm